



**Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor**  
**Barry S. Maram, Director**

## **Illinois Department of Public Aid**

201 South Grand Avenue East  
Springfield, Illinois 62763-0001

**Telephone:** (217) 782-0545  
**TTY:** (800) 526-5812

03/16/04

### **INFORMATIONAL NOTICE**

**TO:** Providers of Nursing Facility Services

**RE:** Release of Medications

---

This notice is being sent to remind long term care facilities of their responsibility to take necessary steps to release medications to residents who have been discharged or are temporarily absent from a facility. This notice restates Department policy previously addressed in Department notices distributed on March 21, 1997 and March 18, 1998. The Department continues to note problems with requests for refills of prescription medications for residents who are discharged from nursing facilities. As a result of medications not being sent with the resident, the Department is being asked to refill medications when Department records show that it is too soon for a refill. Instead of ensuring that residents' medications accompany them when they are discharged from the facility, some facilities have indicated that they are returning medications to the pharmacy for refunds after a resident is discharged, a process that seriously disrupts the continuity of residents' medication therapy.

Current Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) rules at 77 Ill. Adm. Code, Subpart H, address requirements for handling medications at the time of discharge or temporary absence from the nursing facility. Section 300.1620(f) states that "The licensed prescriber shall approve the release of any medications to the resident, or person responsible for the resident's care, at the time of discharge or when the resident is going to be temporarily out of the facility at medication time. Disposition of the medications shall be noted in the resident's clinical record." Comparable language exists for other levels of IDPH facility licensure. Although not required under IDPH regulations, it is suggested that the quantity of medications released also be documented in the resident's clinical record.

In order to avoid refilling of a prescription when a resident is discharged from a facility, facilities must contact the physician for approval to release all medications with the resident and document that such contact was made. All authorized medications should accompany a resident at the time of discharge whether the resident is going home or to another long term care facility. Authorized medications released to a resident by a discharging long term care facility should be utilized upon admission to another long term care facility.

For therapeutic home visits, facility staff should send an appropriate supply of a resident's medications with the resident so he or she will have sufficient doses while out of the facility. In accordance with IDPH 77 Ill. Adm. Code, Section 300.1640(i), "The medications of each resident shall be kept and stored in the originally received containers. Medications shall not be transferred between containers, except that a licensed nurse, acting as the agent of the resident, may remove previously dispensed medication from original containers and place it in other containers to be sent with a resident when the resident will be out of the facility at the time of scheduled administration of medication. When medication is sent out of the facility with the resident, it shall be labeled by the nurse with the name of the resident, name and strength of the medication, instructions for administration and any other appropriate information."

You may access IDPH's rules at <[www.idph.state.il.us](http://www.idph.state.il.us)>. If you have any questions concerning this notice, contact the Bureau of Long Term Care at 217-524-7244.

Anne Marie Murphy, Ph.D  
Administrator  
Division of Medical Programs